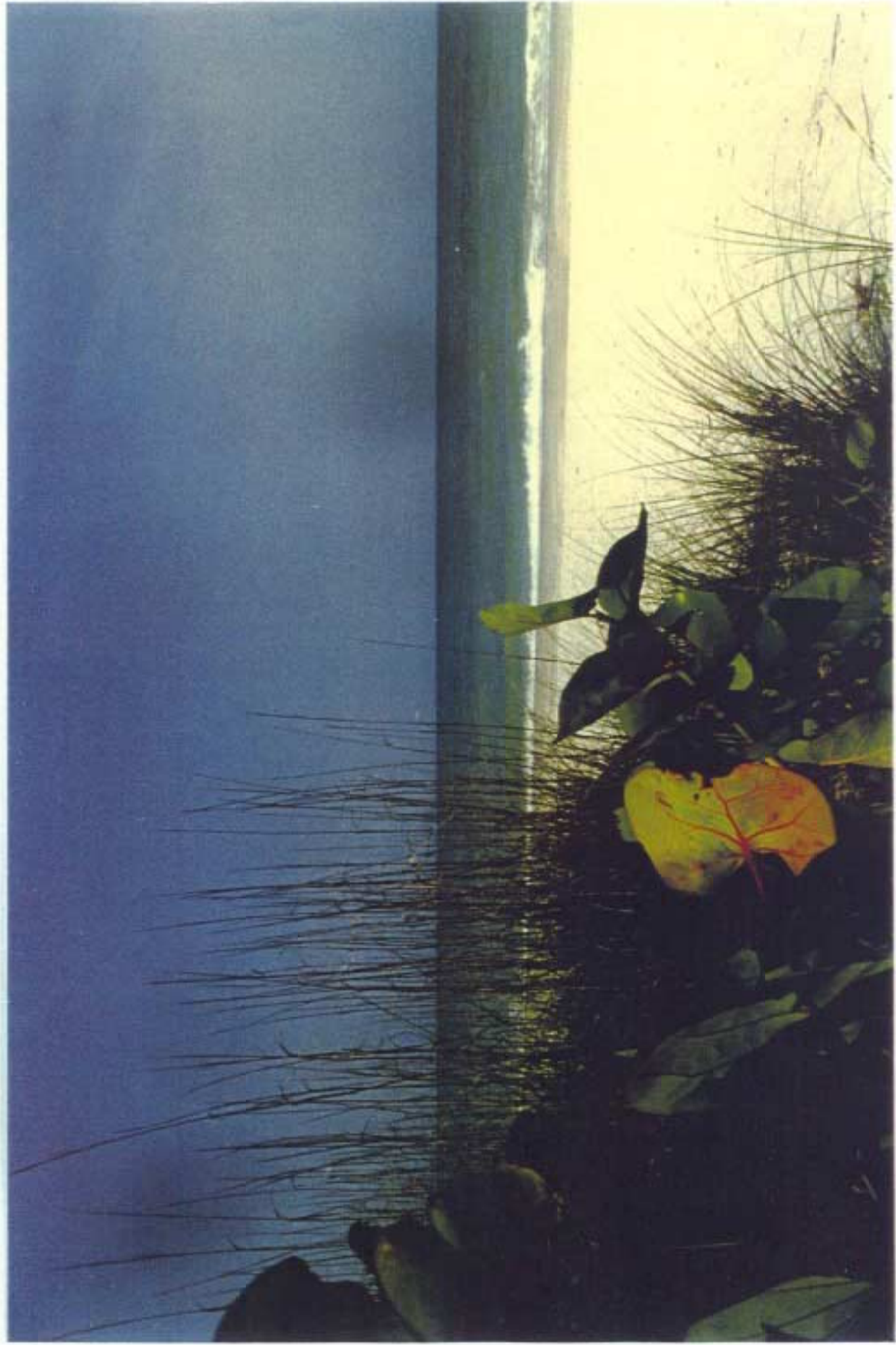


**CITY OF TREASURE ISLAND**



**SUNSET VISTA TRAILHEAD**

# **CITY OF TREASURE ISLAND SUNSET VISTA TRAILHEAD**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

APPLICATION FORM.....	1
PROJECT PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES.....	6
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.....	8
CONCEPTUAL MANAGEMENT PLAN.....	10
PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA .....	16
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION .....	40
EXHIBITS.....	41

**FLORIDA COMMUNITIES TRUST  
PRESERVATION 2000 PROGRAM  
APPLICATION FORM  
FCT/P2000-4 (effective 2-10-98)**

PROJECT NAME Sunset Vista Trailhead  
*(Descriptive site name)*

APPLICANT NAME City of Treasure Island  
*(Name of local government(s) requesting award)*

Address of local government applicant's principal offices

120 - 108th Avenue

Treasure Island, FL 33706

**PARTNERSHIP APPLICATIONS**

Is this a partnership application between two or more local governments as described in Rule 9K-4.0031(12), F.A.C.?

Yes  No

If Yes, provide the name of the local government(s) and the address of the principal office of all local governments that are partnering with the above-named applicant in this application.

**APPLICATION PHASE KEY CONTACT PERSON**

*Note: The Key Contact is required to be an employee of the local government; this individual will be receiving grant-related correspondence and may be required to provide supplemental information; identify only one key contact person.*

Key contact name Hal Bruce, Jr.  
First Middle Last

Title Assistant to the City Manager Elected Official? Yes  No

Department \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address 120 - 108th Avenue

City Treasure Island State FL Zip Code 33706

*If the applicant's principal office address is a post office box then a delivery address is required.*

Delivery Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ ZipCode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (727) 547-4575 \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Secondary (if applicable) SunCom (if applicable)

Fax Number (727) 547-4582 \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Secondary (if applicable) SunCom (if applicable)

Cellular Phone (if applicable) E-mail Address (if applicable)

ESTIMATED TOTAL ACREAGE 1.6 acres

Indicate the exact acreage of the project site, if known. Otherwise, estimate the acreage to two significant digits (e.g., 3.1 acres, 35 acres, 120 acres).

**OWNERSHIP**

Number of separate parcels within project site 5  
*If the site is comprised of multiple parcels, see Rule 9K-4.004(5), F.A.C.*

Number of different owners within project site 5  
*If only one owner, provide name, address, and phone number*

*Note: If the project site is comprised of more than one parcel or more than one owner, complete the attached Acquisition Plan to indicate the general priority and order of the acquisition of sites to insure that, in the event that all sites are not acquired, the purposes of the project will be achieved.*

Has the **entire** project site been preacquired by the applicant through a voluntarily-negotiated transaction within one year prior to the application deadline or will it be acquired within 180 days after the application deadline? (Check the appropriate response below.)

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X  
If A Yes, @ state the closing date of the acquisition(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Has a portion of the project site been preacquired by the applicant through a voluntarily-negotiated transaction within one year prior to the application deadline or will any portion(s) be acquired within 180 days after the application deadline? (Check the appropriate response below.)

Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_  
If A Yes, @ state the closing date of the acquisition(s) On or before June 1, 1999

*Note: The use of condemnation or the threat of condemnation is not considered a voluntarily-negotiated transaction.*

**PROJECT SITE LOCATION**

County(s) Pinellas County

Primary Section 26 Township 31S Range 15E

*Note: Cite only one Section, Township and Range to indicate where most or all of the project acreage resides. Be sure to include the directional designations (i.e., Section 21, Township 1 S, Range 1 E).*

**PROJECT COSTS**

*Estimate the project costs as defined in Rule 9K-4.002(31), F.A.C. Enter an amount in every blank; if the amount is zero, enter \$0.00.*

Cost to purchase land (4 parcels) \$ 1,189,000.00 (1)

**Other acquisition costs**

Cost of appraisal map(s)/certified survey(s) and review \$ 5,000.00

Cost of appraisals and review \$ 7,000.00

Cost of title report(s)/insurance \$ 8,000.00

Cost of environmental audit(s) \$ 1,000.00

Eligible fees or commissions, if any \$ 1,000.00

Other eligible project cost, if any \$ 0.00

Subtotal of the AOther acquisition costs@ \$ 22,000.00 (2)

**ESTIMATED TOTAL PROJECT COSTS** \$ 1,211,000.00 (3)  
*(Should equal the sum of lines (1) and (2).)*

Amount of award requested from FCT \$ 1,000,000.00

Amount or value of local match \$ 211,000.00 (4)  
*(As defined in 9K-4.0031(9), F.A.C.)*

**ESTIMATED TOTAL PROJECT COSTS** \$ 1,211,000.00  
*(Should be the same as (3) shown above)*

Percent of award from FCT 82.576 %  
*(percent of estimated total project costs to be contributed by the Florida Communities Trust)*

Percent of local match 17.424 %  
*(percent of estimated total project costs to be contributed by the local government)*

**TOTAL PERCENTAGE** 100.000 %

Specify the form(s) and source(s) of local match and a brief explanation as appropriate:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Cash from the local government	Amount _____	Explain _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Future cash from the local government	Amount <u>\$208,000.00</u>	Explain <u>Local Option Sales Tax</u>
	Cash from Water Management District	Amount _____	Explain _____
	Cash from federal or state grant	Amount _____	Explain _____
	Cash from private donation	Amount _____	Explain _____
	Value of real property owned by the local government in a qualified preacquisition	Amount _____	Explain _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Value of real property donated by the landowner in a documented bargain sale or donation agreement. <i>Include documentation letter from the owner. If the land is preacquired in a bargain sale, then the contract must evidence a bargain sale.</i>	Amount <u>\$3,000.00</u>	Explain <u>Estimated value of parcel donated by FDOT, based on assessed value per square foot of adjacent property. See Exhibit O for documentation.</u>
	Loan from the Florida Communities Trust <i>Specify the payback strategy for loan</i>	Amount _____	Explain _____

**TOTAL \$211,000.00**  
*(Should be equal to (4) on previous page.)*

**TYPE OF AWARD REQUESTED**

What type of award is requested in accordance with Rule 9K-4.0031, F.A.C? (**Check only one**)

Award of less than 50% of the project costs from FCT.

Award of 50% or more of the project costs from FCT.

100% award for which no local match is required.

*Note: 100% awards are available only to county governments with a population of 75,000 or fewer and municipalities with a population of 10,000 or fewer.*

POPULATION 7,347 (BEBR, 1999)

*Note: Use the most recent estimate of resident population from the most recent edition of Florida Estimates of Population as published by the Population Division, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida.*

Loan

Combination of a grant and loan

## Acquisition Plan

On page 2 of the application under the Ownership section, note the number of separate parcels and the number of different owners reported to be within the project site. If either response contains a number greater than 1, complete this page.

Project Name: Sunset Vista Trailhead

Applicant: City of Treasure Island

Florida Communities Trust (FCT) staff will review the acquisition plan to assure that the purposes of the project can be achieved in the event all parcels can not be acquired.

1. Provide the tax identification number, and the name, address and phone number, if available, for all the owners of parcels within the project boundary

Tax I.D. Number 26-31-15-78804-006-0050  
Martha Dilley  
9700 Gulf Boulevard  
Treasure Island, FL 33706-3212

Tax I.D. Number 26-31-15-78804-008-0250  
Gary Noordhoek  
c/o Harold Noordhoek  
300 Casuarina Concourse  
Coral Gables, FL 33143-6508

Tax I.D. Number 26-31-15-78804-006-0070  
All Children's Hospital Foundation, Inc.  
c/o J. Lloyd Horton  
P.O. Box 31020  
St. Petersburg, FL 33731-8920

Tax I.D. Number 26-31-15-78804-008-0010  
Frederick P. and Clarence D. Pheil  
P.O. Box 732  
Chesterfield, SC 29709-0732

Parcel 104B, WPI Segment Number 256908 1, S.R 699  
Florida Department of Transportation  
11201 N. McKinley Drive  
Tampa, FL 33612-6456

2. Identify the priority parcels needed to achieve the purposes of the project.

The minimum parcels needed are the two that front on Gulf Boulevard, numbers 26-31-15-78804-006-0050 and 26-31-15-78804-008-0250.

3. Identify the order in which the parcels should be acquired, parcels can be grouped in categories.

The parcels should be acquired in the following order:

1. The two parcels fronting on Gulf Boulevard, numbers 26-31-15-78804-006-0050 and 26-31-15-78804-008-0250.
2. The two beachfront parcels, numbers 26-31-15-78804-006-0070 and 26-31-15-78804-008-0010.
3. The remaining land, Parcel 104B, WPI Segment Number 256908 1, S.R 699, is being donated to the city by the Florida Department of Transportation.

## **PROJECT PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES**

### **[Rule 9K-4.0031(10)&(12) and Rule 9K-4.004(5)(a)3., F.A.C.]**

Treasure Island is a small, 744-acre beach community of approximately 7,300 residents. It is located in southern Pinellas County, on the barrier island system which separates the Gulf of Mexico from the mainland. Measuring 3.5 miles long, spanning five islands, the city once contained an extensive coastal dune system dominated by sea oats, sea grape, and other native vegetation, which provided habitat for numerous shorebirds, sea turtles, and other species. During the last several decades, however, rapid urbanization has replaced this unique ecosystem with commercial and residential buildings, paved surfaces, and exotic vegetation. Today, virtually none of the city's once-pristine gulf coast remains undeveloped.

Urbanization of the gulf coastline has brought unintended consequences. As coastal dunes have been leveled and permeable soils have been paved over, natural stormwater drainage patterns have changed, causing frequent flooding and sweeping pollutants into the gulf. Removal of native vegetation has led to beach erosion and loss of wildlife habitat. High-density beachfront development has obscured the view of the gulf for all but a fraction of city residents, and placed a significant number of people and structures in an area that is extremely vulnerable to hurricanes. Because of these issues, it is vital that further coastal development be discouraged, and remaining natural resources be conserved and restored wherever possible.

The proposed project seeks to further these goals by acquiring five gulf-fronting parcels (see Exhibit D-1), containing beachfront and coastal dunes, to be used for conservation and passive recreation. The 1.6-acre site has been partially developed with commercial and residential structures, but the commercial uses have been discontinued due to poor vehicle access, and native vegetation has maintained or reclaimed dominance over a significant area. A primary dune on the site has also been cut through to allow beach access. The project will remove the structures and associated impervious surface, rebuild the primary dune, remove encroaching exotic vegetation, and plant additional native vegetation. Passive recreational amenities will be added, including interpretive trails and benches, and the site will serve as a trailhead for a pedestrian/bike path system that connects to other beach access points (see Exhibit J-2).

The project, which will be known as the Sunset Vista Trailhead, will provide much-needed conservation space in a highly developed urban area. The site is bordered to the east by a four-lane divided arterial roadway (Gulf Boulevard), to the north by a condominium development, and to the south by commercial and single-family residential development. Although the beachfront is designated Preservation on the city's adopted Future Land Use Map (Exhibit H), the upland portion is designated Commercial General and could be redeveloped with higher-intensity uses. The Commercial General designation allows for a variety of retail and office structures, as well as hotel/motel uses with up to 22 units per acre. Public acquisition of the project site will, therefore, protect the environmentally sensitive beachfront from impacts of further development, such as increased stormwater runoff, and additional bright lights that may disorient nesting sea turtles.

Although the surrounding area is highly urbanized, the habitat provided by the site does not exist in isolation. The beachfront and dune are part of a larger coastal beach system, which extends thirty-five miles along the western coast of Pinellas County, and provides critical nesting habitat for the endangered loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*). A loggerhead nest was recorded within the boundaries of the project site in 1996 (see Exhibit F-1), and three other nests were recorded on an adjacent parcel between 1996 and 1998. In addition to creating more open space in which turtles may nest, the project will improve incubating conditions by replanting sea oats and other native vegetation, which decrease the compactness of the sand (Clearwater Marine Aquarium, 1996-1998). Educational signs will also alert beach users to avoid disturbing turtles and their nests.

The project will offer additional benefits to the surrounding area. Removal of impervious surface will allow improved stormwater drainage, lowering the risk of local flooding and decreasing the amount of pollution carried by runoff into the gulf. Hazard mitigation objectives will be furthered by the removal of structures from the hurricane-vulnerable Coastal High Hazard Area. Finally, the absence of commercial and residential buildings will provide a view of the shoreline to the public, complementing beautification efforts along the adjacent roadway.

Public access to the Sunset Vista Trailhead will be maintained and encouraged. Users will be able to access the site from Gulf Boulevard, the city's major thoroughfare, or from the beach itself. A small grass parking lot will be provided on site, and a municipal parking lot approximately two-tenths of a mile away will be accessible by sidewalk. Bike racks, a drinking fountain, and benches will also be installed. Equal access for all users will be ensured by adherence to *Americans with Disabilities Act* requirements.

In summary, creation of the Sunset Vista Trailhead will provide many benefits to the City of Treasure Island, including increased open space, restoration of native vegetation, improved wildlife nesting areas, and enhanced recreational opportunities. Acquisition of this 1.6-acre site will allow the city to reverse some of the damage caused by the rapid development of past decades, and provide beauty and enjoyment to many future generations.

# **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

## **[Rule 9K-4.0031(12) and Rule 9K-4.004(5)(b)5., F.A.C.]**

The 1985 *Growth Management Act* (Section 163, Part II, Florida Statutes) requires local governments to systematically plan for the needs of future residents, and to document these programs in a comprehensive plan. In accordance with this statute, the *City of Treasure Island Comprehensive Plan* serves as the guiding force behind all municipal planning, including the proposed Sunset Vista Trailhead project. The project will further many of the goals, objectives, and policies of the comprehensive plan, of which only a few are summarized here.

The primary purpose of the project is to protect and restore the existing natural resources found on the gulf beach. These resources include the coastal dune system, which provides potential nesting habitat for sea turtles and shore birds, and native vegetation, which helps to inhibit beach erosion and absorb stormwater. The importance of protecting these systems is shown in the following comprehensive plan excerpts:

Along the Gulf of Mexico, beaches and dunes serve as buffers against threatening waves and storm surges while serving as a home and/or nesting area for birds and sea turtles. The preservation of the dune system is reliant upon continued protection against development and the presence of native vegetation. Salt-tolerant plants found within these dunes, including sea oats, railroad vine, and sea grapes, grip sand within their root system. By anchoring down sand, the dune retains its form and can continue to inhibit erosion and protect against tidal action....Treasure Island beaches will continue to require preventative measures for protection against erosion. The city, in cooperation with Pinellas County and the state, has been involved with a number of beach stabilization projects since the early 1970s. These projects include construction of dune walkovers and the replanting of sea oats along shorelines. [Coastal Management and Conservation Element; Section VIII.]

Effective land use planning has its greatest importance in shaping redevelopment and protecting valuable natural resources. Without judicious planning and enforceable constraints, urbanization and development will continue to place excessive stresses on the natural and man-made elements of the city's environment [Future Land Use Element; Section I].

Natural resources are protected by many goals, objectives, and policies in the Coastal Management and Conservation Element, including Objective 1.3 (aquatic resources), Objective 1.4 (native vegetation), Objective 1.5 (species of special concern), Objective 1.9 (coastal dunes), and their associated policies, as shown in Exhibit A. The project fulfills these directives by acquiring 1.6 acres of coastal land for conservation and recreation purposes, removing three structures and associated pavement, restoring the primary dune, replanting native vegetation, and protecting remaining wildlife habitat.

A secondary purpose of the project is to promote recreation and beautification for the Treasure Island population, which includes both residents and visitors. The project meets the intent of the comprehensive plan, which seeks to further the system of public and private recreation and open space sites available to the public (Recreation/Open Space Element; Section I.). Through the project, the city will provide specific recreational amenities discussed in the plan, as shown below:

Treasure Island is a popular destination for the many bicyclists who use Gulf Boulevard as a thoroughfare. Gulf Boulevard is an FDOT right-of-way, on which the city is unable to designate bike lanes. However, the city has a beautification project planned for this road, and...plans are being evaluated for an approximately four-mile-long pedestrian and bike trail, which would connect beachfront sidewalk areas with Gulf Boulevard. [Recreation/Open Space Element, Section II., A., 11.]

The project will further plan directives by beautifying and landscaping an area along Gulf Boulevard (Transportation Element Policy 1.4.1), and by serving as a trailhead for the citywide pedestrian/bike trail system (Recreation/Space Element Policy 1.1.7). The project also furthers Recreation/Open Space Element Objective 1.1, which ensures public access to parks, beaches, and shores; and Policy 1.1.1, which establishes level-of-service standards for recreational facilities and sites. (See Exhibit A.)

A third purpose of the project is to decrease development in an area vulnerable to damage from hurricanes and flooding. The project site falls into the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA), the 100-year flood plain, and the federally-designated hurricane velocity zone (AV-zone®), which were settled at high densities decades before their vulnerability was fully understood. The comprehensive plan establishes guidelines for redevelopment in these areas, with the intent of minimizing loss of life and property during strong storms. Sunset Beach, in which the project site is located, is considered a critical area for such redevelopment, as shown in this excerpt from the plan:

Small lot sizes and intense development have resulted in medium to high density development in most of Sunset Beach. Within Treasure Island, Sunset Beach contains the most significant land use conflicts and redevelopment pressures. These conflicts, found between 97th Avenue and Blind Pass, are the result of the unique character of the area. Because of the age and condition of the existing structures and the small size of residential lots, the trend in this area has been toward wholesale redevelopment, rather than revitalization of the existing land uses. [Future Land Use Element; Section II., A.]

The project furthers the intent of the plan by acquiring 1.6 acres of land in Sunset Beach, eliminating commercial and residential uses, and redeveloping the site to low-intensity conservation/recreation use. These efforts also fulfill directives from the Coastal Management and Conservation Element, including Objective 2.1 (guides public expenditures in the CHHA), Objective 2.2 (limits population densities in the CHHA), and their associated policies, as shown in Exhibit A.

In addition, to further guide efforts to reduce storm hazards, the plan adopts by reference the 1999 *Pinellas County Unified Local Mitigation Strategy*, as described below:

[T]he Local Mitigation Strategy initiative was designed to assist communities with hazard mitigation. ...Each work group identifies repetitive loss properties, hazardous materials sites, and other vulnerable areas within its community, and formulates strategies to reduce known hazards. Appropriate recommendations of the work group are then integrated into the community's comprehensive plan, land development regulations, site plan reviews, and other planning procedures and guidelines. [Coastal Management and Conservation Element; Section XII., E.]

Specific strategies identified by the Local Mitigation Strategy include eliminating non-conforming uses as it applies [*sic*] to hazard mitigation® and construction of additional dunes, dune vegetation, sand sharing, renourishment program, erosion control structures, and similar projects to reduce erosion, mitigate flooding, and enhance the beach® (see Exhibit M-2). In accordance with Coastal Management and Conservation Element Policy 3.3.5, the project furthers these recommendations by removing dilapidated structures from a hurricane-vulnerable area, rebuilding a primary dune, and planting native vegetation.

In summary, the *City of Treasure Island Comprehensive Plan* contains many goals, objectives, and policies designed to protect natural resources, provide recreational opportunities, and reduce hazardous coastal development. The Sunset Vista Trailhead project will follow comprehensive plan guidance to meet these ends, and to create a project that will enhance and beautify the city.

# **CONCEPTUAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **[Rule 9K-4.004(5)(d), F.A.C.]**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Sunset Vista Trailhead project is for the City of Treasure Island to acquire a partially developed, 1.6-acre area of coastal land and convert it to conservation/recreation use. The project will allow the city to achieve many goals simultaneously, including protection and restoration of natural resources, increased recreational opportunities, beautification of a major transportation corridor, enhancement of the municipal greenway system, removal of development from a hurricane-vulnerable area, and promotion of environmental education.

### **II. SITE DESCRIPTION**

As shown in Exhibit D-1, the 1.6-acre project site consists of five coastally located parcels surrounding the 97th Avenue public beach access. The western, beachfront portion of the site is contiguous with a 35-mile countywide beach system fronting on the Gulf of Mexico, as partially shown in Exhibit C. The remainder of the site is surrounded by commercial and multifamily residential development to the north, south, and east, and lies adjacent to the intersection of two four-lane arterial roadways (Gulf Boulevard and Blind Pass Road).

Natural coastal resources are present on the western, beachfront portion of the site, and include a beach dune system, and a native vegetative community that includes sea oats and sea grape (see Exhibit P). These resources have been slightly encroached by development; a path has been cut through the primary dune to allow beach access, a saltwater well has been installed in the dune line, and some exotic vegetative species are present. The eastern, upland portion of the site has been more heavily developed, and includes a convenience store, a bait shop with attached apartment, a detached garage, and two small paved parking areas. The commercial structures are underutilized and somewhat dilapidated. Although the beachfront portion of the site is designated Preservation land on the city's adopted Future Land Use Map (Exhibit H), the upland area is designated Commercial General, and could potentially be redeveloped with more intensive commercial uses.

### **III. PLANNED SITE DEVELOPMENT, IMPROVEMENTS, AND ACCESS**

The project will remove existing structures and pavement, restore natural resources, and add passive recreational amenities. All physical improvements will be located in the northern half of the project site (see Exhibit Q-2), and will fall into two discrete vegetative zones. The Pioneer zone<sup>®</sup> includes the dune line and sandy beachfront, extending west to the Gulf of Mexico; this area has been altered slightly by human traffic, but is not covered by structures or pavement. The Scrub zone<sup>®</sup> encompasses land eastward of the dune line to Gulf Boulevard, which is heavily disturbed by development and exotic vegetation. Generally speaking, the pioneer zone will be restored as closely as possible to its natural

condition, while the scrub zone will be replanted with native vegetation but will include some passive recreational amenities.

Pioneer® vegetation is so named because it traps windblown sand within its roots as it grows, creating mound-shape dune formations that become part of the beach landscape. The pioneer zone is ecologically critical because it provides potential nesting habitat for the loggerhead sea turtle and some shore birds. Therefore, physical improvements to this area will concentrate on restoring predevelopment conditions. The project will rebuild the primary dune, remove a saltwater well installed in the dune line, remove exotic vegetation, and add a small retaining wall or other barrier to direct foot traffic away from the dune, as shown in Exhibit Q-1. The area will also be replanted with native vegetation, primarily sea oats but also railroad vine, saltmeadow cordgrass, beach morning glory, and other pioneer species.

The scrub zone has been heavily disturbed by development. Improvements to this area will therefore be more extensive, as detailed in Exhibit Q-1. Existing structures and pavement will be removed, and the area will be replanted with native scrub vegetation such as sea grape, saw palmetto, and sabal palm, interspersed with interpretive trails, sitting areas, and educational displays. A paved recreational trail will also pass through this portion of the site; however, the interpretive trails will be made of pervious materials such as crushed shell. Benches and educational markers will be distributed along the trails, and a small wooden shade structure will be constructed. Also provided will be a small, unpaved parking area in the southeast corner of the site; bicycle racks, located on the paved trail; and at least one drinking fountain, which will be connected to the existing potable water distribution line in an area to be determined.

In order to separate the project site from the surrounding commercial/residential areas, landscape buffers will be placed along the north, south, and east borders of the scrub zone. While the buffers to the north and south will consist of native vegetation, a narrow strip on the eastern edge of the site may include a few compatible non-native species (e.g., Washingtonian palms, date palms), in order to maintain a consistent streetscape along Gulf Boulevard. This vegetation will encompass a very small area, and will be separated from the scrub zone by a low retaining wall or other barrier. An existing wooden sign next to the right-of-way will be replaced with a concrete monument identifying the Sunset Vista Trailhead. Some low-level lighting may also be included along the right-of-way, but will be shielded from the beach to avoid disturbing sea turtles.

The site will be accessible from multiple directions. Vehicular traffic may reach the site from two of the city's major thoroughfares, Gulf Boulevard and Blind Pass Road; although minimal parking will be provided on site, a municipal parking lot is located approximately two-tenths of a mile away, and is connected to the site by a sidewalk. Bicyclists and pedestrians may approach the site from sidewalks along Gulf Boulevard to the north and south; in the future, they will also be able to travel from the north via a paved multipurpose trail paralleling the beach, which will connect to the Gulf Boulevard sidewalk at the project site (see Exhibit J-2). Pedestrians may also use any of the city's twenty-seven other beach access points and walk to the site along the beach. Physical access for all users will be ensured by adherence to *Americans with Disabilities Act* requirements.

In keeping with the themes of conservation and passive recreation planned for the site, no concessions or leases for recreation, food, or other revenue-producing enterprises are anticipated to be granted. In addition, all construction and replanting activities will be scheduled during times and seasons that do not threaten nesting turtles or their eggs.

#### **IV. KEY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

##### **A. Natural Resource Enhancement and Protection**

###### **1. Dunes and Vegetation**

An environmental survey was completed on May 18, 1999, and is included as Exhibit P. Approximately .2 acres of the project site is covered by a beach dune community, which includes species such as sea oats, sea grape, and bushy seaside oxeye. The Florida Natural Areas Inventory (1998) classifies beach dune communities as imperiled, or vulnerable to extinction due to erosion and the impacts of human development. The primary dune on the project site has been cut in two by a path to allow beach access. There is some encroachment from exotic vegetation, as well as an illegal saltwater well placed in the dune line at an unknown time. The project will remove these encroachments, eliminate three commercial/residential structures near the dune line, restore the primary dune, and replant native vegetation. Dedicated trails will redirect beach users around the dunes, which will be protected by a retaining wall or other barrier. These improvements will allow the dune community to reestablish its original biological composition and function.

The city will protect these restored natural resources through regular maintenance. The Beautification Division of the Public Works Department will monitor native vegetation and remove any invading exotic species. Litter will continue to be removed daily by the Sanitation Department, and periodic volunteer days will be held when additional cleanup is needed. Educational signs will be placed around the site to alert users of the need to avoid littering, and to leave vegetation undisturbed.

###### **2. Wildlife Protection**

The project will acquire and protect a potential nesting area of the loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), a threatened species which nests in large numbers along Pinellas County gulf beaches between May and September. According to the 1996 *Sea Turtle Conservation Program Report* published by the Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA), the agency contracted by Pinellas County to monitor the local turtle population, a loggerhead nesting site was documented within the boundaries of the project area during that year. The project will enhance potential nesting area by removing nearby buildings and pavement, rebuilding a coastal dune through which a path has been cut, replanting native vegetation, and constructing trails to direct foot traffic away from dunes.

Ongoing monitoring and protection of the sea turtle population will continue to be implemented by the CMA, as contracted by Pinellas County. Educational displays will instruct beach users to avoid disturbing nesting turtles or eggs. Lighting on the project site will be kept to a minimum and shielded from the beach so that it will not attract and endanger turtles. Finally, as with all municipal beaches, the project site will be closed during the hours of 1:00-5:00 a.m.; since most turtle activity takes place at night, this restriction will discourage human traffic during critical nesting and hatching times.

## **B. Environmental Education Program**

The project will take advantage of the natural beachfront setting to educate the public about the coastal environment. Included in the site will be interpretive trails, which will allow users to explore natural resources without damaging fragile plants and dunes (see Exhibit Q-1). Educational displays will identify plant and animal species, and direct users to avoid littering or disturbing wildlife.

The Treasure Island Recreation Department will also incorporate regularly scheduled educational field trips to the site into its summer youth program, to instruct children about the coastal ecosystem and the importance of protecting it. The program features environmental education by the AMarine Gang,<sup>®</sup> a costumed acting troupe provided by the Museum of Science and Industry, followed by weekly trips to various beaches to explore natural resources.

## **C. Greenway Management**

The project site will serve as a trailhead for the Treasure Island greenway network, which consists of three distinct trails (see Exhibit J-2). The West Gulf Boulevard On-Street Trail, a paved sidewalk, follows the right-of-way south of the project site. This trail connects with the Land= End Boardwalk, an elevated wooden path that winds around a peninsula at the southern city limit. The Treasure Island Beach Trail currently ends about one mile north of the project site, but will be extended in the future to form a continuous network with the other trails. The project site will mark the dividing point between the Treasure Island Beach Trail and the West Gulf Boulevard On-Street Trail.

When completed, the combined trails will extend along the gulf beach from the northern to southern city limits, connecting twenty-eight beach access points and numerous shops, restaurants, and commercial recreation establishments. Located at the midpoint of the trail system, the project site will provide an attractive destination, offering sitting areas, drinking fountains, bicycle racks, and nearby parking. By providing these amenities, the project will increase the visibility and accessibility of the city=s greenways.

Along with the rest of the greenway system, the trailhead will be maintained on a regular basis. Sanitation crews will patrol the site daily to empty trash containers and remove litter, and local neighborhood and business associations will be encouraged to participate in Avolunteer days<sup>®</sup> for

further cleanup as needed. Educational signs will alert beach users of the need to avoid littering. On-site vegetation will also be monitored regularly by Beautification Division of the Public Works Department, and any encroaching exotic species will be promptly removed.

#### **D. Coordination**

Development and maintenance of the project site will comply with statutory laws governing protection of dunes, sea oats, sea grape, marine turtles, and other protected natural resources. The city will coordinate, as needed, with oversight agencies such as the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and Department of Environmental Protection to ensure that restoration efforts comply with applicable guidelines. In addition, the project outline and site plan have been reviewed and approved by the CMA (see Exhibit R).

### **V. FUNDING FOR SITE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT**

The city anticipates spending between \$200,000 and \$400,000 for development of the Sunset Vista Trailhead, as suggested by the preliminary cost estimate shown on the following page. The city will fund these improvements through revenues generated by the one-cent local option sales tax, known locally as APenny for Pinellas.@ Completion of the project is scheduled to occur over a two-year period, beginning with the demolition of existing structures.

Once restoration and construction activities are completed, maintenance of the site will be integrated into the city's regular budget, financed from its general fund. It is estimated that maintaining the site will require ten additional staff-hours per week from the Beautification Division of the Public Works Department. The Sanitation Department already maintains the beachfront portion of the site, and is not expected to see a significant increase in staff-hours following project development.

### **VI. SUMMARY**

The proposed project, to be known as the Sunset Vista Trailhead, provides a wealth of opportunity for the City of Treasure Island. Acquisition of the site will allow the city to provide increased open space, restoration of native vegetation, improved wildlife nesting areas, and enhanced recreational and educational opportunities, all integrated into one innovative 1.6-acre site design. The project will preserve rare and important natural resources, while allowing the public to explore and enjoy the coastal environment.

**CITY OF TREASURE ISLAND  
SUNSET VISTA TRAILHEAD  
PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE  
5/19/99**

<b>QTY.</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>UNIT</b>	<b>UNIT COST</b>	<b>EXTENDED COST</b>
1	MOBILIZATION AND TRAFFIC CONTROL	EA.	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
1	DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS, PAVING, ETC.	EA.	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00
1	SITE GRADING	EA.	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
1	UTILITY RELOCATION/MODIFICATIONS/REMOVAL	EA.	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
1	MONUMENT SIGN	EA.	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00
1	SHADE STRUCTURE	EA.	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00
10	EDUCATIONAL MARKERS	EA.	\$1,500.00	\$15,000.00
450	RETAINING WALLS	LINEAR FT.	\$30.00	\$13,500.00
450	RETAINING WALL FOOTINGS	LINEAR FT.	\$12.00	\$5,400.00
30	BOLLARDS	EA.	\$150.00	\$4,500.00
2	BIKE RACKS	EA.	\$1,200.00	\$2,400.00
1	DRINKING FOUNTAIN	EA.	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
5	BENCHES	EA.	\$1,400.00	\$7,000.00
5	TRASH RECEPTACLES	EA.	\$850.00	\$4,250.00
4800	MULTI-PURPOSE TRAIL (4" THICK CONCRETE)	SQ. FT.	\$3.50	\$16,800.00
730	SHELL WALKING PATHS W/ FABRIC SEPARATOR	SQ. YD.	\$9.00	\$6,570.00
220	SHELL WALKING PATHS W/ FABRIC SEPARATOR	SQ. YD.	\$9.00	\$1,980.00
5800	DUNE PLANTING	SQ. FT.	\$0.75	\$4,350.00
32600	NATIVE AND ORNAMENTAL SHRUB PLANTING	SQ. FT.	\$1.50	\$48,900.00
60	SABAL PALMS	15' C.T.	\$150.00	\$9,000.00
6	DATE PALMS	18' C.T.	\$4,000.00	\$24,000.00
5	SHADE TREES	3" CAL.	\$400.00	\$2,000.00
15	ORNAMENTAL/PALM TREES	EA.	\$350.00	\$5,250.00
32600	IRRIGATION	SQ. FT.	\$0.35	\$11,410.00
302	MULCH	CU. YDS.	\$35.00	\$10,564.81
			<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$296,874.81</b>
			20% CONTINGENCY	\$59,374.96
			<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$356,249.78</b>

# **PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA**

## **[Rule 9K-4.008, F.A.C.]**

**(1) Furtherance of Growth Management and Comprehensive Plan Implementation [Rule 9K-4.008(1)(a-b), F.A.C.]**

**(a) Growth Management Objectives**

- 1. Does the proposed project assist the applicant in ensuring the proper location and distribution of development by redirecting development away from a coastal or other high hazard area or a 100-year flood plain? If so, provide a map showing the location of the project site in relationship to the coastal or other high hazard area or a 100-year flood plain. Discuss how acquiring the project site will ensure the proper location and distribution of development by redirecting development away from coastal or other high hazard area or a 100-year flood plain. (10 points);**

As determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, all land in Treasure Island is located within the Coastal High Hazard Area and 100-year flood plain (see Exhibit M-1). Land immediately adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico coastline, including the majority of the project site, falls into an area of high velocity wave action known as the AV-zone.<sup>@</sup> Property in the V-zone carries the highest possible risk of flood damage due to hurricanes and other strong storms.

As shown on the adopted *Future Land Use Map* (Exhibit H), all developable land in the project area is designated for Commercial General use. Under Section 68-322 of the *City of Treasure Island Code of Ordinances*, Commercial General land may be used for high-intensity development such as retail stores, offices, restaurants, and alcoholic beverage establishments. In addition, the designation allows hotel and motel accommodations at a density of 22 units per acre. Therefore, public acquisition of the site would serve to direct development away from the 100-year flood plain, the Coastal High Hazard Area, and the highly vulnerable V-zone.

- 2. Does the proposed project help rectify land use conflicts associated with antiquated subdivisions or vested land uses that became non-conforming as a result of adoption of the local comprehensive plan? If so, provide a copy of the antiquated subdivision plat or vested land use determination. Discuss how the antiquated subdivision or the vested land use is in conflict with the adopted comprehensive plan. Cite the specific objectives or policies in the comprehensive plan or the specific land development regulations that are in conflict with subdivision or vested land use. (10 points);**

As shown in Exhibit D-2, the project site was originally platted in 1915, many years before modern development controls were established. The original subdivision created a number of developable parcels directly on the beach, ending only thirty feet from the Gulf of Mexico. The remaining beachfront was intended for use as a road to serve these parcels. Today, after decades of beach erosion, many of these parcels lie partially or wholly underwater.

In addition to being prohibited by federal and state regulations, development of beach parcels is forbidden by the *City of Treasure Island Comprehensive Plan*, which has designated all land waterward of the primary dune system as Preservation on the Future Land Use Map (Exhibit H). The proposed project will transfer several antiquated, partially submerged parcels into public ownership, where they will be used for conservation and recreation purposes.

3. **Does the proposed project provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities within the existing urban service area? If so, provide a copy of the Future Land Use Map showing the designated Urban Service Area or other similar designations that have been formally adopted by the local government on its Future Land Use Map or provide documentation that the project site is located in a built-up area where public facilities and services such as sewage treatment system, roads, schools, and recreation areas, are already in place. (10 points).**

Treasure Island is a built-out community which is fully supplied with potable water, sanitary sewer service, roadways, and other public services. Although the project site is part of large, 35-mile coastal beach system, it lies adjacent to the intersection of two four-lane arterial roadways (Gulf Boulevard and Blind Pass Road), and is partially surrounded by commercial and multifamily residential development. This development can be clearly seen in the aerial photograph of the area (Exhibit E). In addition, the upland portion of the site is designated Commercial on the city's adopted Future Land Use Map (Exhibit H). By providing a beachfront park with interpretive trails, sitting areas, and a scenic view of the Gulf of Mexico, the project will bring additional recreational opportunities to this heavily developed urban area.

- (2) Local Comprehensive Plan Provisions for Conservation, Coastal Management, and Outdoor Recreation and Open Space

1. Does the proposed project further comprehensive plan directives that ensure the protection of natural areas or open space through public acquisition? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the cited objectives or policies. (5 points);

Although only a few natural areas remain within Treasure Island, the city is committed to acquiring and preserving those resources whenever possible. The *City of Treasure Island Comprehensive Plan* reinforces that commitment, as shown in these excerpts from the Coastal Management and Conservation Element:

Policy 1.3.6: Marine wetlands, barrier island property containing native vegetative communities, and/or shoreline locations with limited habitat diversity shall be considered priorities for environmental land acquisition.

Policy 2.2.3: The City shall maintain its program of public land acquisition and management for recreation, conservation, and preservation areas.

Objective 2.1: The City shall limit public expenditures that support development permitted in Coastal High Hazard Area except for restoration or enhancement of natural resources, or facilities determined to be an overriding public benefit.

The project furthers the objective and policies by acquiring 1.6 acres of sensitive coastal land for conservation and recreation purposes. As documented in a recent environmental survey (see Exhibit P), natural resources on the site include a dune system; vegetation such as sea oats, sea grape, and bushy seaside oxeye; and potential nesting areas for sea turtles and shore birds. The project will remove three structures and associated pavement from this sensitive site, remove an illegal saltwater well from the dune system, restore a primary dune, replant the area with native vegetation, and protect the remaining habitat from further encroachment by development.

- 2. Does the proposed project further comprehensive plan directives that ensure the preservation of native vegetative communities? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the cited objectives or policies. (5 points);**

The Coastal Management and Conservation Element of the comprehensive plan ensures the preservation of native vegetative communities through the following directives:

Objective 1.4: The City shall conserve, appropriately use, and protect native vegetation.

Policy 1.3.6: Marine wetlands, barrier island property containing native vegetative communities, and/or shoreline locations with limited habitat diversity shall be considered priorities for environmental land acquisition.

Policy 1.4.4: Land development regulations shall continue to encourage the removal and prohibit the planting of exotic species such as punk trees (*Melaleuca sp.*), Australian pine (*Casuarina sp.*), and Brazilian pepper (*Schinus sp.*).

The project will further these directives by acquiring beachfront land containing sea oats and other native vegetation, rebuilding a primary dune, removing exotic vegetation that has encroached into the area, removing buildings and impervious surfaces that interfere with vegetative growth, and replanting the area with native vegetation.

- 3. Does the proposed project further comprehensive plan directives that ensure the protection of listed animal species or habitats of listed species? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the cited objectives or policies. (5 points);**

Species listed as endangered, rare, threatened, or of special concern by the federal *Endangered Species Act* or the Florida *Endangered and Threatened Species Act* are protected by the Coastal Management and Conservation Element of the comprehensive plan:

Objective 1.5: The City shall protect species with special status from adverse impacts of development.

Policy 1.5.1: The City shall assist in the application of and compliance with all state and federal regulations pertaining to species of special status (i.e., endangered, rare, threatened, and species of special concern).

Policy 1.5.2: Beach renourishment projects shall protect sea turtle nesting areas by limiting construction in such areas to winter and spring months, or by collecting eggs from the nests, incubating them, and releasing the hatchlings.

The project will further the intent of these directives by acquiring and protecting a potential nesting area of the loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), a threatened species which nests in large numbers along Pinellas County gulf beaches between May and September. According to the 1996 *Sea Turtle Conservation Program Report* published by the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, the agency contracted by Pinellas County to monitor the local turtle population, a loggerhead nesting site was documented within the boundaries of the project area during that year. The project will enhance the nesting area by removing nearby buildings and pavement, rebuilding a coastal dune through which a path has been cut, replanting native vegetation, constructing trails to direct foot traffic away from dunes, and installing educational displays instructing beach users to avoid and report turtle nests. All construction and replanting activities will be scheduled during times and seasons that do not threaten nesting turtles or their eggs. Finally, all municipal beaches are closed during the hours of 1:00-5:00 a.m.; since most turtle activity takes place at night, this restriction will discourage human traffic during critical nesting and hatching times.

- 4. Does the proposed project further comprehensive plan directives that ensure the protection or enhancement of beach or shoreline ecosystems? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the cited objectives or policies. (5 points);**

The most important ecological resource found on the Treasure Island gulf coast is its dune system. Dunes are formed when sea oats, sea grape, and other Apioneer® species trap windblown sand within their roots, producing mound-shaped formations that serve as natural flood barriers, and provide nesting areas for shore birds and marine turtles. The comprehensive plan ensures the protection and enhancement of these important communities through the following directives, taken from the Coastal Management and Conservation Element:

Objective 1.9: The City of Treasure Island shall protect and restore its beaches, dunes, and natural systems and establish construction standards which minimize the impacts of man-made structures on these systems.

Policy 1.9.4: The City shall continue its program for the restoration and maintenance of the coastal dune system which shall include stabilization projects utilizing native vegetation and development of an educational program emphasizing the need to protect the coastline.

Policy 1.9.5: The City shall continue its program for the restoration and maintenance of its beaches.

The project will further these directives by decreasing the impact of development on the dunes located on the project site. A primary dune, which has been cut in two to allow beach access, will be restored and foot traffic will be diverted around it. Three structures and pavement adjacent to the dune line will be removed, and the cleared areas will be planted with native vegetation. A saltwater well installed illegally within the dune line will be eliminated. Exotic vegetation encroaching into dunes will also be removed. By encouraging the growth of additional native vegetation, these measures will improve the health and stability of the dune system.

Finally, the project will work to educate the public regarding the importance of preserving the coastal dune system. Interpretive trails will be added, with educational displays identifying various plant and animal species in the coastal ecosystem. In addition, the Treasure Island Recreation Department will incorporate regularly scheduled educational field trips to the site into its summer youth program.

- 5. Does the proposed project further comprehensive plan directives to restore or enhance degraded natural areas including, but not limited to, removal of non-native vegetation, reforestation, shoreline or dune restoration, or restoration of natural hydrology? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the cited objectives or policies. (5 points);**

Over the past several decades, rapid urbanization replaced much of the city's original ecosystem with commercial and residential buildings, paved surfaces, and exotic vegetation. As the community has become built-out, attention has turned to preserving remaining resources and restoring degraded areas wherever possible. The comprehensive plan encourages the restoration of natural areas through the following policies, taken from the Coastal Management and Conservation Element:

Policy 1.3.6: Marine wetlands, barrier island property containing native vegetative communities, and/or shoreline locations with limited habitat diversity shall be considered priorities for environmental land acquisition.

Policy 1.4.4: Land development regulations shall continue to encourage the removal and prohibit the planting of exotic species such as punk trees (*Melaleuca sp.*), Australian pine (*Casuarina sp.*), and Brazilian pepper (*Schinus sp.*).

The project will further these policies by acquiring land containing relatively intact natural resources, but which has been partially encroached by development and exotic vegetation. Three buildings, two paved parking areas, and a saltwater well will be removed, and the area will be planted with additional native vegetation. Exotic vegetation will be removed so that native species may establish themselves more thoroughly on the coastal dune system. Finally, a path cut through the middle of a dune will be relocated, and the dune will be rebuilt and replanted with sea oats. Enhancement of these natural resources will, in turn, provide improved nesting opportunities for shore birds and the loggerhead sea turtle.

- 6. Does the proposed project further comprehensive plan directives that ensure the protection or enhancement of surface and groundwater quality? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the cited objectives or policies. (5 points);**

Although the city is not within an area of groundwater recharge, it directly impacts the Gulf of Mexico and other surface waters. According to the Tampa Bay National Estuary Program's *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Tampa Bay* (1996), the single largest threat to surface water quality is stormwater runoff. A result of urbanization, stormwater runoff occurs when permeable soils and natural flood plains are covered by pavement, causing rainfall to accumulate and mix with oil, fuel, pesticides, and other ground-level pollutants before draining into local waters. In the Tampa Bay area, it is estimated that stormwater runoff contributes up to 60 percent of zinc, mercury, lead, pesticides, and other contaminants found in surface waters. The most effective way to limit this runoff is to decrease impervious surface in favor of natural soils and vegetation, which absorb and filter stormwater.

The Infrastructure Element provides for the protection of surface waters through the following goal and objective:

Goal 4: Stormwater shall be managed to provide flood protection for residents and businesses and to preserve, protect, and enhance the water quality of receiving water bodies.

Objective 4.2: The City shall continue to protect and improve surface water quality within its jurisdiction to meet or exceed the standards established by the Southwest Florida Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and Chapter 62-25, Florida Administrative Code.

In addition, the Coastal Management and Conservation Element contains the following objective:

Objective 1.1: The City shall protect the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater.

The proposed project will further the goal and objectives by decreasing impervious surface on the project site. Three residential/commercial structures and associated pavement will be removed, and the area will be replanted with native vegetation. Although some recreational amenities will be added, including pedestrian trails and sitting areas, pervious materials will be used wherever possible to allow more rainfall to absorb into the soil. These improvements will decrease the amount of pollutant-bearing stormwater flowing into the Gulf of Mexico.

- 7. Does the proposed project further comprehensive plan directives that protect or restore aquatic vegetation including, but not limited to, aquatic weed control, restoration or creation of aquatic grass beds, or shoreline restoration? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the cited objectives or policies. (5 points);**

Not applicable.

- 8. Does the proposed project further comprehensive plan directives that provide additional public access to publicly-owned or publicly accessible natural areas including, but not limited to, water bodies, saltwater beaches, and to existing protected areas? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the cited objectives or policies. (5 points);**

The City of Treasure Island is committed to providing public access to its beaches and shores, and maintains twenty-eight municipal beach access points located along the gulf coast (see Exhibit J-1). The comprehensive plan reflects the city's commitment through the following policies, taken from the Recreation/Open Space Element:

Policy 1.4.4: Public access to identified recreation sites shall be ensured and shall be designed to protect the integrity of natural features including, where present, beaches and shores.

Policy 1.6.2: The City shall continue to protect beaches as recreation and open space areas.

Policy 1.6.4: The City shall work with Pinellas County and other appropriate governmental agencies to ensure and maintain public beach access.

The project furthers these policies by expanding an existing beach access point into a more visible park and trailhead, while protecting and restoring the natural resources found on site. The site will be improved with interpretive trails, educational displays, benches, and connection to a multipurpose trail system that will link all of the city's beach accesses, as shown in Exhibits J-2 and Q-1. All amenities will meet guidelines of the federal *Americans with Disabilities Act*, ensuring that beach access is provided equally for persons with differing ages and abilities.

- 9. Does the proposed project provide for acreage or outdoor recreational facilities necessary to maintain or improve adopted levels of service standards established in the comprehensive plan for outdoor recreation areas? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Identify the specific acreage or facility standards that are identified in the adopted level of service standards that would be maintained or improved. (10 points);**

The proposed project will enable the city to create a mini-park, defined by Policy 1.1.1 of the Recreation/Open Space Element as serving a two- to three-block area, and containing facilities such as benches, open space, and landscaping (see Exhibit A). Adopted level-of-service standards established by the policy require the city to maintain one mini-park per 2,500 persons. With more than 13,000 residents, visitors, and tourists, the city is required to have a minimum of five mini-parks, and currently has seven. Therefore, the proposed project will allow the city to improve its level-of-service standard for mini-parks.

Additionally, the policy requires the city to provide one beach access per half-mile of shoreline. With 3.5 miles of gulf beaches, the city is required to maintain seven beach accesses; it has twenty-eight, as shown in Exhibit J-1. While the project builds upon an existing beach access, it will increase the visibility and accessibility of the site, provide new amenities to enhance beach use (including sitting areas and interpretive trails), and provide a trailhead for a multipurpose trail system that will extend the length of the city. Therefore, while the number of municipal beach accesses will not change, the city's ability to meet adopted level-of-service standards will be qualitatively improved.

Finally, level-of-service standards call for the city to provide one acre of total open space, inclusive of all recreational sites and beach accesses, per 1,000 persons. Based on these standards, the city is required to provide 13.2 acres of open space, but currently provides 33 acres. The proposed project will bring the total open space to 34.6 acres, improving the city's fulfillment of this level-of-service standard.

- 10. Does the proposed project further comprehensive plan directives that ensure the provision of facilities for outdoor recreation activities including, but not limited to, nature trails or boardwalks, waterway trails, interpretive displays, educational programs, wildlife observation areas, or picnic areas? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the cited objectives or policies. (5 points);**

As in many coastal Florida communities, the economy of Treasure Island is fueled by the tourism industry, and the city depends heavily on outdoor recreation to attract tourists and seasonal visitors. The city comprehensive plan encourages appropriate recreational use of natural resources, as shown in the following policies from the Recreation/Open Space Element:

Policy 1.1.5: The City shall encourage a variety of recreational activities, including the utilization of unique natural features and scenic areas.

Policy 1.6.3: The City shall develop and incorporate into the land development regulations creative techniques aimed at preserving the access to and view of the beach and other recreational facilities by all residents of and visitors to this community.

Policy 1.1.7: The City shall create a dedicated pedestrian and bicycle trail, as feasible, which shall be coordinated with the *Pinellas County Bikeways Plan*.

The project will further these policies by incorporating natural resources into the site design (see Exhibit Q-1). Interpretive trails will allow beach users to explore coastal dunes, sea oats, and other native vegetation without damaging fragile resources. The site will contain multiple sitting areas designed to allow views of the Gulf of Mexico and observation of wildlife. Finally, the site will connect to a multipurpose trail system which will extend the length of the city, allowing pedestrians, bicyclists, and in-line skaters enjoyment of the gulf beach.

- 11. Does the proposed project further future land use designations or comprehensive plan directives that provide for creating greenways consisting of environmentally sensitive lands or outdoor recreation opportunities? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the future land use designations or cited objectives or policies. (5 points);**

Greenways, as defined by Rule 9K-4002(14), F.A.C., include any linear open space providing recreational opportunities, linking with other recreational resources and following a natural landscape feature. Treasure Island contains three such greenways: The Treasure Island Beach Trail, a paved multipurpose trail extending along the northern gulf beach; the West Gulf Boulevard On-Street Trail, a paved sidewalk which is a major thoroughfare for pedestrians and bicyclists to the south; and the Land's End Boardwalk, an elevated wooden path which circumnavigates a peninsula at the southernmost end of the city (see Exhibit J-2). These corridors provide space for non-motorized transportation, and connect beach accesses, shops, restaurants, and commercial recreation sites.

The proposed project site will serve as a major hub for the Treasure Island greenways system. The West Gulf Boulevard On-Street Trail extends from the project site south, where it connects with the Land's End Boardwalk. As shown in Exhibit J-2, the Treasure Island Beach Trail currently ends about one mile north of the project site, but will be extended in the future to form a continuous network with the other trails. The project, which will be known as the Sunset Vista Trailhead, will mark the dividing point between the Treasure Island Beach Trail and the West Gulf Boulevard On-Street Trail.

As a component of the multipurpose trail system, the project will further the following comprehensive plan policy, taken from the Recreation and Open Space Element:

Policy 1.1.7: The City shall create a dedicated pedestrian and bicycle trail, as feasible, which shall be coordinated with the *Pinellas County Bikeways Plan*.

In addition to providing a scenic destination, the project will offer trail users increased linkage to parking, local businesses, and two major roadways (Gulf Boulevard and Blind Pass Road). In this way, the project will enhance use of the trails for recreation and as a non-motorized transportation corridor, fulfilling two important functions of greenways.

- 12. Does the proposed project further comprehensive plan directives that ensure the preservation of historical sites? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the cited objectives or policies. (5 points);**

Not applicable.

- 13. How does the proposed project further comprehensive plan directives that provide for coordination with existing resource protection plans, such as aquatic preserve management plans, SWIM plans, habitat conservation plans, manatee protection plans, and estuarine sanctuary plans? If so, summarize the relevant objectives or policies that are furthered. Provide the numeric citation of the relevant objectives or policies. Discuss how the project site would assist in furthering the cited objectives or policies. (5 points).**

The city supports regional efforts to protect the environment, and participates in resource protection plans set forth by the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Tampa Bay National Estuary Program. Although these programs give priority to Tampa Bay and its tributaries, they contain guidelines which are also applicable to the Gulf of Mexico. The Coastal Management and Conservation Element contains the following policies supporting these plans:

Policy 1.8.7: The City of Treasure Island shall work with the Southwest Florida Water Management District in implementing the Tampa Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management (S.W.I.M.) program in an effort to improve water quality and restore coastal habitats...

Policy 1.8.8: The City shall support the policies identified in the Tampa Bay National Estuary Program *Comprehensive Preservation and Management Plan* for Tampa Bay in an effort to improve water quality and encourage natural resource recovery.

The project will further the intent of these policies by promoting surface water improvement and shoreline restoration, consistent with the guidelines of the regional plans. By decreasing the amount of impervious surface on the project site, the project will decrease stormwater runoff and its pollution of the gulf. The project will also rebuild the primary coastal dune, remove exotic vegetation, and replant native species, which will help to restore natural drainage patterns and improve wildlife habitat.

- (2) Furtherance of Natural Resource Conservation, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Recreation [Rule 9K-4.008(2)(a-d), F.A.C.]**

- (a) Protection of Vegetative Communities**

- 1. Does the project site consist of predominantly native forested or non-forested vegetative communities that have not been subjected to significant disturbances or alteration as a result of current or past human activities? If so, describe the various vegetative communities on the project site, including the quality of the communities and the approximate acreage of each community. Describe the extent of the disturbances or alteration as a result of current or past human activities on the project site and the approximate acreage of the disturbed or altered area. (5 points);**

The majority of the 1.6-acre site consists of sand dunes, dune vegetation, and undisturbed natural beach. Approximately .2 acres is covered by dunes and native vegetation, including sea oats, sea

grape, and bushy seaside oxeye (see Exhibit P). About .4 acres have been altered by development, which includes a small bait shop with three structures, two small paved parking areas, an unpaved beach path, and exotic vegetation (see Exhibit G). The remainder of the site, about one acre, is comprised of a partially submerged sandy beach.

It should be noted that the majority of the site consists of beachfront, which is typically sparsely vegetated even in its natural state. Therefore, although the site is not dominated by native vegetation, about 75 percent of the site consists of a relatively undisturbed natural ecosystem, of which native vegetation is a significant element.

- 2. Does the project site contain a viable population of one or more listed plant species? If so, identify the listed plant species. Discuss the viability of the listed plant, including the approximate density or number of listed plants on the project site, how the plants will be protected, and who documented the plant species. (5 points);**

The project site does not contain any plant species listed as endangered or threatened by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (1998) or the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission (1997). However, as shown in Exhibit P, the site does contain populations of sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*) and sea grape (*Coccolobis uvifera*), which are protected by statutory law. These plants grip sand within their root systems, helping to prevent beach erosion. Under Section 370.041, F.S., it is unlawful to Acut, harvest, remove, or eradicate@ either species from public land; however, owners of private land are exempt from this directive. Therefore, public acquisition of the site is necessary to ensure the protection of these important species.

The sea oats and sea grape found on the project site cover only a small area, about .2 acres. However, the site is part of a continuous, countywide gulf beach system extending 35 miles from north to south. This system, which was once dominated by dunes and native vegetation, supports significant populations of sea oats and sea grape (Pinellas Planning Council, 1988). Acquisition of the project site will contribute to countywide efforts to preserve and restore these populations, and in doing so reduce erosion along the gulf coast.

- 3. Does the project site contain one or more natural communities recognized by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory as Aimperiled@ or Acritically imperiled?@ If so, describe the Aimperiled@ or Acritically imperiled@ natural community. Discuss the viability of the community, including the quality of the community, the approximate size of the community in acres, how the vegetative community will be protected, and who identified the community. (5 points);**

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory classifies beach dune communities as Aimperiled@, or vulnerable to extinction due to natural and human factors. Dunes and their vegetation are primarily threatened by erosion from strong storms, and by alteration during human development activities. Preservation of these resources is crucial due to their role as natural flood barriers, and the habitat they provide for nesting birds and marine turtles (FNAI, 1990 and 1998).

Approximately .2 acres of the project site is covered by a beach dune community, which includes species such as sea oats, sea grape, and bushy seaside oxeye (see Exhibit P). The primary dune has been cut in two by a path to allow beach access. There is some encroachment from exotic vegetation, as well as an illegal saltwater well placed in the dune line at an unknown time. The project will remove these encroachments, restore the primary dune, replant native vegetation, and eliminate three commercial/residential structures near the dune line. Dedicated trails will direct beach users around the dunes, which will be protected by a retaining wall or other barrier.

Although this community is small, the project site is part of a larger beach and dune system stretching 35 miles along the Pinellas County coast. This beach, particularly its remaining dunes, provides critical habitat for shore birds and the loggerhead sea turtle. Protection of the beach dune community found on the project site, therefore, will contribute to countywide efforts to preserve this valuable resource.

- 4. Will the degraded or altered vegetative communities, if any, that occur on the project site be restored or enhanced to their natural state in terms of biological composition and ecological function? If so, discuss the extent of the degradation, the approximate acreage of the degraded area, and the extent of the restoration area in acres. Discuss how the area will be restored or enhanced to their natural state in terms of biological composition and ecological function. (5 points).**

Approximately .2 acres of native dune vegetation, including sea oats, sea grape, and bushy seaside oxeye, are found on the project site. This area has been cut through with a beach access path, dividing the primary dune in half, and a saltwater well of unknown age has been installed within the dune line. Some exotic species have also encroached into the native vegetation, although the community is essentially intact. The project will remove these encroachments, redirect beach access, rebuild the primary dune, and replant sea oats to restore the dune system to its original condition. With regular maintenance to prevent exotic regrowth, the community should be able to reestablish its original biological composition and ecological function.

To reinforce these restoration efforts, further improvements will be made to the developed area (.4 acres) adjacent to the dune line. Three structures and associated pavement will be removed, to be replaced by native vegetation and passive recreational amenities, as shown in Exhibit Q-1. These improvements will reduce stormwater runoff and redirect beach access away from the fragile dune community.

**(b) Protection of Wildlife**

- 1. Does the project site contain habitat recognized by appropriate state or federal agencies as typically suitable for one or more listed animal species? If so, identify the listed species that may use the site and describe the habitat on the project site that the listed species would use. Discuss the viability of the habitat, including the quality of the habitat, the approximate size**

**of the habitat in acres, how the habitat will be protected, and who identified the suitability of the habitat. (5 points);**

Pinellas County provides one of the largest nesting areas in the world for loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*). According to the Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA), the agency contracted by the county to monitor the sea turtle population, about twelve percent of nesting activity takes place on the beaches of Treasure Island annually. In 1996, a turtle nest was documented at the southern end of the project site, as shown in Exhibit F-1. Between 1996 and 1998, three other nests were documented on the parcel to the immediate north of the project site, according to the agency's annual *Sea Turtle Conservation Program Reports*. The project site, therefore, both contains and is surrounded by viable loggerhead turtle habitat. Although the site itself contains only about one acre of nesting area, it is part of a continuous, 35-mile gulf beach system extending over the length of the county, nearly all of which is nested by loggerhead turtles (CMA, 1998). Although the project site is of adequate quality for nesting purposes, it has suffered impacts of human development, and could be improved through restoration efforts.

- 2. Has one or more listed animal species been recently documented by professionally accepted methods to use all or a portion of the project site as habitat? If so, identify the listed species. Discuss how the listed species using the site as habitat will be protected and who identified the listed species. (5 points);**

According to the *Sea Turtle Conservation Program Report* published by the CMA, loggerhead turtle nesting site R136.75 was documented within the project area during the 1996 nesting season. The nest produced 103 live hatchlings. Loggerhead turtles are listed as a threatened species by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (1998).

The project will protect sea turtle nesting habitat in several ways. By removing structures and impervious surfaces from the beachfront parcels, the project will decrease the amount of pollutant-bearing stormwater runoff flowing onto the beach and into the Gulf of Mexico. Converting the site into conservation/recreation use will prevent it from being developed with higher-intensity commercial uses, which could bring increased nighttime foot traffic and bright lighting, both of which disrupt nesting and hatching turtles. Most importantly, restoration of the primary dune and associated vegetation will create more sheltered areas for turtles to place their nests. The roots of sea oats and other plants decrease the compactness of the sand, creating a more favorable incubating environment for the eggs (CMA, 1998).

- 3. Does the project site, alone or in conjunction with other adjacent conservation lands, support the recovery or maintenance of a significant population, as recognized by the appropriate state or federal agency, of one or more listed animal species? If so, identify the listed species and who documented that the project site supports the recovery or maintenance of a significant population. Discuss the viability of the listed species habitat, including the size and quality of the listed species habitat on the project site and on any adjacent conservation lands and how the listed species habitat will be protected. (5 points)**

As a documented loggerhead turtle nesting area, the project site supports the recovery and maintenance of this threatened population. Although the project site itself is relatively small, it is a part of a 35-mile countywide beach and dune system that provides critical habitat for the loggerhead, which is listed as a threatened species by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (1998). This larger beach system is of adequate physical quality for nesting purposes, but due to the level of waterfront development and human beach traffic, requires a fairly aggressive level of intervention to protect the turtle population from disorientation and harassment. This intervention is performed by the CMA, who regularly patrol beaches for turtle nests, then place cages and warning signs over the nests to protect hatchlings. In addition to the dune restoration efforts described above, the project will reinforce CMA efforts by placing permanent signs educating users about the loggerhead nesting cycle, and the need to avoid and report turtle nests. Artificial lighting will also be kept to a minimum, and will be shielded to avoid disorienting turtles.

With turtles nesting over virtually the entire Pinellas County gulf coast, it is important to protect as much of this area as possible. However, with the gulf beaches divided among twelve municipalities, nearly all of which are heavily developed, turtle habitat can generally only be acquired and improved one small area at a time. Small-scale projects such as this one provide crucial links in the countywide effort to protect sea turtles and restore their populations to viability.

**(c) Protection of Water Resources**

**1. Will the quality of surface waters occurring on the project site be improved through programs including, but not limited to, the elimination of pollution sources, or restoration of aquatic habitat? If so, discuss the restoration plan and the expected results. (5 points);**

The rapid coastal development of the past several decades has brought pollution to the Gulf of Mexico and other local waters. In particular, the widespread paving over of natural soils and vegetation has led to pollution from stormwater runoff, which mixes with ground-level deposits of oil, grease, fuel, pesticides, and other chemicals before flowing into the gulf. In its 1996 *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Tampa Bay*, the Tampa Bay National Estuary Program estimates that stormwater runoff contributes up to 60 percent of many pollutants found in Tampa Bay waters. The most effective way to limit this runoff is to reduce paved surfaces and increase the use of soils, plants, turf block, permeable concrete, and other materials that absorb rainfall.

The project will improve water quality in the Gulf of Mexico by removing .26 acres of existing impervious surface. Three structures and two paved parking areas will be replaced by native vegetation and passive recreational amenities, such as pedestrian trails and sitting areas. Although a paved multipurpose trail will pass through the site, the remainder of the amenities will be made of more pervious materials such as wood and crushed shell. In addition to improving existing conditions, the project will prevent the site from being developed with higher-intensity commercial uses, which could increase impervious surface and generate more ground-level pollutants.

- 2. Are any surface water resources occurring on or adjacent to the project site designated as Class II waters, Outstanding Florida Waters, a National Estuary or Marine Sanctuary, aquatic preserve, wild and scenic river, or other local or state government special status designation intended to protect the natural resources and water quality of the waterbody? If so, provide a map showing the boundary of the Class II waters, Outstanding Florida Waters, a National Estuary or Marine Sanctuary, aquatic preserve, wild and scenic river, or other local or state government special status or provide a letter from the appropriate federal, state, or local government confirming that the project site is located within the designated boundary. Discuss the intention of the designation and how the project site will further the intent of the designation. (5 points);**

As shown on the Florida Natural Areas Inventory Map (Exhibit F-2), the project site lies within the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve, established by Chapter 72-663, Laws of Florida, and Chapter 258, Florida Statutes (F.S.). State aquatic preserves are established to protect submerged lands which have exceptional biological, aesthetic, and scientific value (Section 258.36, F.S.), and are protected from detrimental activities such as dredging, filling, and dumping of effluent. However, protected waters may be used for lawful and traditional public uses of the preserve, such as sport and commercial fishing, boating, and swimming (Section 258.43 (1), F.S.).

The project will further the intent of statutory law by promoting public recreational use of the Gulf of Mexico, and by preserving coastal land from development which could negatively impact aquatic resources. The project also meets the requirements of Section 258.42(1)(a), F.S., which states that submerged lands within aquatic preserves may not be sold unless the transaction is in the public interest.

- 3. Does the project site protect high aquifer recharge areas or potable water supply areas as recognized by the applicable water management district, United States Geological Survey, or other local, state, or federal agencies? If so, provide a map showing the boundary of the high aquifer recharge areas or potable water supply areas or provide a letter from the appropriate federal, state, or local government confirming that the project site is located within the high aquifer recharge areas or potable water supply areas. Discuss the intention of the designation and how the project site will further the intent of the designation. (5 points).**

Not applicable.

**(d) Providing Outdoor Recreation**

- 1. Will the project site be utilized as urban open space, located within a built-up urban area and will be managed with as minimal disturbance as possible to the natural resources on the project site? If so, discuss the urban nature of the project site and how it will be managed with as minimal disturbance as possible to the natural resources on the project site including, the existing development around the project site. (10 points);**

The primary purpose of the project is to create passive, scenic open space which will offset the intensive urban development of the surrounding area. The project site is located on the west side of Gulf Boulevard, an area which the *Treasure Island Comprehensive Plan* describes as containing the most intense commercial tourist development in the city (Future Land Use Element, Section II. B.). This development, a high-density mixture of commercial and residential uses, almost entirely blocks the view of the Gulf of Mexico for the remainder of the city. Although residents and visitors may enter the beach through twenty-eight public access points along Gulf Boulevard, many of these entry points are small and difficult to see from the roadway. The project will expand an existing small access point into a highly visible open space park, allowing the urban community a scenic view of the shoreline.

Because the project site is located in an urban area and will be used as a recreational park, extra steps will be taken to minimize disturbance to natural resources. Interpretive trails will allow users to explore and identify natural resources, but will lead them away from fragile dunes and vegetation which may be trampled, as shown in Exhibit Q-1. Educational signs placed around the site will alert beach users of the need to avoid littering, and to leave vegetation and wildlife undisturbed. Beach management will also be conducted to preserve natural resources; the site will be patrolled daily for litter, and the native vegetation will be regularly monitored for invasion by exotic species. As with other municipal beaches, the project site will be closed during the hours of 1:00-5:00 p.m., which will help protect nocturnal turtle nesting activities from human interference.

- 2. Will the proposed project provide nature trails, boardwalks, waterway trails, wildlife observation areas, scenic overlooks, interpretive displays or other such facilities to promote outdoor recreation with as minimal disturbances as possible to the natural resources on the project site? If so, describe what facilities will be provided and discuss how they will be integrated into the project site with as minimal disturbances as possible to the natural resources on the project site. (10 points);**

The project will promote outdoor recreation and education by incorporating natural resources into the site design (see Exhibit Q-1). A focal point of the project will be a number of interpretive trails, which will contain educational displays identifying native plant and animal species. Signs will also educate beach users to avoid disturbing fragile resources such as coastal dunes, sea oats, and turtle nesting sites. The trails will be constructed with the minimum possible disturbance to the surrounding vegetation and dunes, and will direct traffic away from sensitive areas using trails, retaining walls, and other barriers.

Finally, the site will include multiple sitting areas, including one sheltered location, which will provide opportunities for passive recreation and wildlife observation. These amenities will be placed in areas that do not damage existing dunes or vegetation, and will be constructed of materials such as wood and crushed shell which will allow some absorption of rainfall.

- 3. Will the acquisition of the project site provide for new or enhanced access for outdoor recreational or management purposes to other natural areas used for outdoor recreation including, but not limited to existing parks, greenways and waterways? If so, describe what additional areas will be accessed and what additional recreational or management benefits would accrue. (10 points);**

The proposed project site will serve as a major hub for the Treasure Island greenways network, which consists of three distinct trails (see Exhibit J-2). The West Gulf Boulevard On-Street Trail, a paved sidewalk, follows the right-of-way south of the project site. This trail connects with the Land's End Boardwalk, an wooden path that wraps around a peninsula at the southern city limit. The Treasure Island Beach Trail currently ends about one mile north of the project site, but will be extended in the future to form a continuous network with the other trails. The project, which will be known as the Sunset Vista Trailhead, will mark the dividing point between the Treasure Island Beach Trail and the West Gulf Boulevard On-Street Trail.

When completed, the combined trails will extend along the gulf beach from the north to south city limits, connecting twenty-eight beach access points and numerous shops, restaurants, and commercial recreation establishments. Located at the midpoint of the trail system, the project site will provide an attractive destination, offering sitting areas, drinking fountains, bicycle racks, and nearby parking. By providing these amenities, the project will increase the visibility and accessibility of the city's greenways, both as recreational facilities and as non-motorized transportation corridors.

- 4. Does the project site contain an intact salt or freshwater beach that will be managed for recreation uses while preserving the natural character and functions of the project site? If so, identify the sites and discuss how the beach will be managed for recreation while protecting the natural features of the project site. (10 points);**

The project site, which lies adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico, contains an intact saltwater beach which will remain open to the public for recreational use. The project will improve and preserve the natural character of the beach by removing existing buildings and pavement, restoring a primary dune, replanting native vegetation, and constructing interpretive trails to direct beach users away from sensitive vegetation. The site will also serve as a hub connecting two paved recreational trails, which will work to divert additional pedestrian and bike traffic off of the sandy beach.

The natural resources of the site will be maintained and protected on an ongoing basis. Educational signs will alert beach users of the need to avoid littering, and to leave vegetation and wildlife undisturbed. Sanitation crews will patrol the beach daily to empty trash containers and remove litter, and local neighborhood and business associations will be encouraged to participate in Avolunteer days® for beach cleanup as needed. Beach and dune vegetation will be monitored regularly by the Beautification Division of the city Public Works Department, and any encroaching

exotic species will be removed. Turtle nesting sites will continue to be monitored and protected by the CMA.

- 5. Will the proposed project provide regularly scheduled and ongoing educational programs on the project site to promote the protection of natural resources? If so, describe what type of ongoing natural resource educational programs are proposed and how often the programs would be scheduled. (10 points).**

In addition to protecting coastal resources, the project will work to educate the public regarding their importance. The site will contain interpretive trails, which will allow users to explore the environment without trampling fragile plants and dunes. Educational displays will identify plant and animal species, and direct users to avoid littering or disturbing wildlife. Lastly, the Treasure Island Recreation Department will incorporate regularly scheduled educational field trips into its summer youth programs, to instruct children about the coastal ecosystem and the importance of protecting it.

- (3) Innovative, Unique, and Outstanding Project Elements  
[Rule 9K-4.008(3)(a-k), F.A.C.]**

- (a) Acquisition: Will the proposed project provide for alternatives to the acquisition of fee interests in land, including, but not limited to, acquisition of less than fee interest in a portion of the project site through conservation easements? If so, discuss what technique will be used. Discuss what portion of the site will be acquired under this techniques and the extent of public access to the area. (5 points).**

Although the majority of the site will be obtained through fee simple acquisition, one parcel measuring 87 square feet is being acquired through donation by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Documentation related to this transaction is presented in Exhibit O.

Under FDOT procedures, surplus land may be transferred to municipal ownership at no cost if it will be used for a defined public purpose, such as the proposed project. In accordance with this agreement, the site will remain free and open to the public at all times, other than those times normally restricted in municipal parks (between 1:00 and 5:00 a.m.).

- (b) Management: Will the proposed project provide for innovative and outstanding land and/or water management techniques or facilities design that promote natural resource conservation, coastal management, or outdoor recreation? If so, list the innovative and outstanding management techniques or facilities design that promote natural resource conservation, coastal protection, or outdoor recreation. Discuss how these activities or facilities are innovative and/or outstanding and exceed what would be normally expected under best management practices for the project site. (5 points).**

The project promotes innovative land management by furthering conservation, recreation, beautification, and hazard mitigation goals with a single land use. Conservation goals will be furthered by the restoration of the primary coastal dune, replanting of native vegetation, removal of impervious surface, and addition of educational displays. Recreational interests will be served by the addition of amenities such as benches, a shade structure, drinking fountains, bike racks, and interpretive trails, as well as connection to two paved multipurpose trails. Beautification goals will be attained by the removal of three dilapidated structures blocking scenic access to the Gulf of Mexico, and by the addition of trees and native vegetation along the right-of-way. Finally, hazard mitigation objectives will be fulfilled by the removal of commercial and residential development from the Coastal High Hazard Area, V-Zone, and 100-year flood plain, and the conversion of this land to low-intensity public use. All of these goals will be served on this 1.6-acre parcel through the use of a single, innovative site design, shown in Exhibit Q-1.

**(c) Special Planning Initiatives.**

- 1. Is the project site located within an Area of Critical State Concern as designated pursuant to Section 380.05, Florida Statutes? If so, provide a map showing the boundary of the Area of Critical State Concern designation and the location of the project site or provide a letter from the Department of Community Affairs confirming that the project site is located within the boundaries of the Area of Critical State Concern. Discuss the intention of the designation and how the project site will further the intent of the designation. (5 points).**

Not applicable.

- 2. Is the project site located within a municipality or county that was designated as a Sustainable Florida Community, pursuant to Section 163.3244, Florida Statutes, and that has executed a contract with the Department? If so, provide a map showing the boundary of the Sustainable Florida Community designation and the location of the project site and a copy of the executed contract with the Department of Community Affairs. Discuss the intention of the designation and how the project site will further the intent of the designation. (5 points).**

Not applicable.

- 3. Is the project site located within the boundary of the Eastward Ho! Corridor, pursuant to Executive Order 94-54, and as determined and approved by the corridor counties, South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils, and the Department? If so, provide a map showing the boundary of the Eastward Ho! Corridor and the location of the project site or provide a letter from the Department of Community Affairs or Regional Planning Council confirming that the project site is located within the boundaries of the Eastward Ho! Corridor. Discuss the intention of the designation and how the project site will further the intent of the designation. (5 points).**

Not applicable.

- 4. Is the project site located within the boundary of a Waterfront Florida Community: said boundary must be described in a current contract between the applicant and either the Department or the Department's subcontracting grantee? If so, provide a map showing the boundary of the Waterfront Florida Community and the location of the project site or provide a letter from the Department of Community Affairs confirming that the project site is located within the boundaries of the Waterfront Florida Community. Discuss the intention of the designation and how the project site will further the intent of the designation. (5 points).**

Not applicable.

- 5. Is the project site located within an area identified in the local government's Local Mitigation Strategy as a mitigation priority? If so, provide a map showing the mitigation priorities of the local government and a copy of the local government's Local Mitigation Strategy document. Discuss the intent of the designation and how the project site will further the intent of the designation. (5 points).**

The project site meets criteria for improvement under the 1999 *Pinellas County Unified Local Mitigation Strategy*, a cooperative effort of twenty-four local governments. The study identified a set of goals and objectives to be met by all member governments, and a list of specific priorities designated by each community. Excerpts from the Pinellas County Unified Local Mitigation Strategy document are included as Exhibit M-2.

The list of goals and objectives includes the following, under the heading APhysical Property and Infrastructure Issues@:

(f) Objective: Provide incentives for improving substandard properties and for eliminating non-conforming uses as it applies [*sic*] to hazard mitigation.

(g) Objective: Protect the shoreline by natural and man-made systems, that are designed to reduce potential damages and erosion.

(h) Objective: Limit residential density increases within the coastal high hazard area.

Each of these objectives will be furthered by the project. Objective (f) will be met by the removal of dilapidated structures from small shoreline lots which were platted in 1915 (see Exhibit D-2), before modern development controls were instituted. Objective (g) will be fulfilled by the restoration of a primary coastal dune and replanting of shoreline vegetation, which will help to reduce beach erosion and flooding of upland areas. Objective (h) will be furthered by the removal of a residential use from the project area, which lies in the Coastal High Hazard Area; the project will also prevent redevelopment of the site with hotel/motel units, which would be permitted under existing land development regulations.

Specific mitigation priorities identified for Treasure Island include Aconstruction of additional dunes, dune vegetation, sand sharing, renourishment program, erosion control structures, and similar projects to reduce erosion, mitigate flooding, and enhance the beach.@ The project will fulfill these priorities by rebuilding a primary dune, replanting native vegetation, and removing impervious surface to reduce accumulation of stormwater.

The entire city is located in the Coastal High Hazard Area and 100-year flood plain, making all properties in the city priorities for hazard mitigation. However, beachfront parcels along the gulf coast are located in the especially vulnerable AV-zone,@ an area of high-velocity wave action identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (1983), and are in the greatest need of protection. Portions of the project site are located in the V-zone, as shown in Exhibit M-1.

- (d) Unique Features and/or Historical Sites Features: Does the project site contain unique natural features, or historical, archeological or cultural sites that are recognized by an appropriate agency or expert in the field? If so, discuss the quality of the unique natural features, or historical, archeological or cultural sites, the approximate size of the feature, how the feature will be protected, and which agency or expert in the field identified the feature. (10 points).**

Not applicable.

- (e) Multiple Benefits: Is the acquisition of the project site being pursued in conjunction and collaboration with other state, federal, local, or non-profit agencies acquiring adjacent lands? Will the multiple acquisition of these sites by multiple agencies provide synergistic benefits for resource conservation or outdoor recreation? If so, discuss how the acquisition is being coordinated with the other agencies and how the project site will provide synergistic benefits for resource conservation or outdoor recreation. (5 points).**

Not applicable.

- (f) Neighborhood Park. Is the entire project site less than 10 acres and located along streets where people can walk or bike without encountering heavy traffic, or is the project site of a size defined as a neighborhood park in the local plan? If so, discuss how the project site will be used as a neighborhood park, how people can walk or bike without encountering heavy traffic, and whether the entire project site is less than 10 acres or is of a size defined as a neighborhood park in the local plan (provide copy of the local plan definition). (10 points).**

The project site measures only 1.6 acres, and connects with the West Gulf Boulevard On-Street Trail, a paved sidewalk which is a popular thoroughfare for pedestrians and bicyclists in the south half of the city. Additional sidewalks extend along Gulf Boulevard to the north. Future plans call for the site to be connected to the Treasure Island Beach Trail, a dedicated path for non-motorized travel along the northern gulf beach. The site will serve as scenic and recreational center for the

Sunset Beach neighborhood, and is open and free to the public. Therefore, the site meets the criteria of a neighborhood park as defined by Rule 9K-4.008(3)(f), F.A.C.

- (g) Urban Core Park. Is the project site surrounded by built up commercial, industrial, or mixed use areas and does it function to intersperse congested urban core areas with open areas? If so, describe the existing development surrounding the project site and how the project site will function to intersperse congested urban core areas with open areas. (10 points).**

Treasure Island is a built-out community, with virtually no undeveloped land remaining. The project site is located on the west side of Gulf Boulevard, an area which the *Treasure Island Comprehensive Plan* describes as containing the most intense commercial tourist development in the city (Future Land Use Element, Section II. B.). Development patterns include an assortment of high-density commercial, single-family and multifamily uses, on small lots with minimal setbacks, and with no buffering between different land uses. With these structures blocking virtually the entire view of the Gulf of Mexico for the remainder of the city, the proposed project will bring badly needed open space to an overdeveloped area.

As shown in the aerial photograph (Exhibit E), the project site is surrounded by developed land. To the north lies a condominium development; to the south is a mix of restaurant/lounge establishments and single-family residential structures. The site also lies adjoins the intersection of two major roadways, Gulf Boulevard and Blind Pass Road, as shown on Exhibit L-1. The project will create passive open space in the midst of this intense development, and will serve as a buffer between the built-up area and a portion of the beachfront, which is considered conservation open space (Recreation/Open Space Element, Section II. B.). By these criteria, the site will function as an urban core park as defined by Rule 9K-4.008(3)(g), F.A.C.

- (h) Providing a Greater Share of the Match. The applicant is committed to providing a greater percentage of a local match for an award. Up to 20 points based on the following:**

- 1. Will the applicant provide a local match for 50 percent or more of the project costs? (10 points); or**

No.

- 2. Will the applicant provide a local match for 55 percent or more of the project costs? (15 points); or**

No.

- 3. Will the applicant provide a local match for 60 percent or more of the project costs? (20 points).**

No.

- (I) Greenway Network. Will the project enhance a local or regional network of linked greenways by connecting two or more greenways, by extending existing greenways, or by contributing to closing gaps in existing greenways? If so, identify the sites in the greenway network, discuss the greenway network and supply supporting information. (10 points).**

Pinellas County has created the beginnings of an extensive greenway system, made up of dedicated trails, bike lanes, and other corridors. Currently extending 89.7 linear miles, the county has planned for a network more than double this size, stretching nearly 198 miles. A significant portion of this system will consist of greenways constructed and managed by individual municipalities such as Treasure Island (Pinellas County Planning Department, 1996).

Treasure Island contains three such greenways: The Treasure Island Beach Trail, a paved multipurpose trail extending along the northern gulf beach; the West Gulf Boulevard On-Street Trail, a paved sidewalk which is a major thoroughfare for pedestrians and bicyclists to the south; and the Land's End Boardwalk, an elevated wooden path which circumnavigates a peninsula at the southernmost end of the city (see Exhibit J-2). These corridors provide space for non-motorized transportation, and connect beach accesses, shops, restaurants, and commercial recreation sites.

The proposed project site will serve as a major hub for the Treasure Island greenways system. The West Gulf Boulevard On-Street Trail extends from the project site south, where it connects with the Land's End Boardwalk. As shown in Exhibit J-2, the Treasure Island Beach Trail currently ends about one mile north of the project site, but will be extended in the future to form a continuous network with the other trails. The project, which will be known as the Sunset Vista Trailhead, will mark the dividing point between the Treasure Island Beach Trail and the West Gulf Boulevard On-Street Trail.

When completed, the combined trails will extend along the gulf beach from the north to south city limits, connecting twenty-eight beach access points and numerous shops, restaurants, and commercial recreation establishments. Located at the midpoint of the trail system, the project site will provide an attractive destination, offering sitting areas, drinking fountains, bicycle racks, nearby parking, and two major roadways (Gulf Boulevard and Blind Pass Road). These amenities will increase the visibility and accessibility of the city's greenways, and further the goals of the Pinellas County greenway system.

- (j) Project Excellence. Does the proposed project further natural resource conservation, coastal management, outdoor recreation or growth management in a manner that cannot be adequately evaluated with the criteria established elsewhere in this rule chapter? If so, describe how the proposed project furthers natural resource conservation, coastal management, outdoor recreation or growth management in a manner that was not adequately evaluated with the criteria established elsewhere in this rule chapter. Include documentation supporting this position. (up to 10 points).**

The project displays excellence by including matching funds of more than twenty percent of the requested grant, even though no match is required. With a permanent population of only 7,347 (BEER, 1999), Treasure Island qualifies as a small local government under the criteria of Rule 9K-4.0031(6)(b), F.A.C., and is not required to provide matching funds.

The City of Treasure Island is requesting an award of \$1,000,000 from the Florida Communities Trust, and is offering a local match of \$211,000. Of this amount, \$3,000 represents the estimated value of real property donated by the Florida Department of Transportation. The remaining \$208,000 consists of funds dispensed to the city from the one cent local option sales tax (known locally as APenny for Pinellas@).

## SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

1. What county is the project site located? Pinellas County
  
2. What is the name and address of the main newspaper that covers the area where the project site is located?  
Name The St. Petersburg Times  
Address 490 First Avenue South  
City St. Petersburg State FL Zip Code 33701
  
3. What is the Florida House of Representative district number that encompasses the project site?  
House District Number 54
  
4. What is the Florida Senate district number that encompasses the project site?  
Senate District Number 22
  
5. What is the Regional Council district that encompasses the project site?  
Regional Council District Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
  
6. What is the Water Management District that encompasses the project site?  
Water Management District Southwest Florida Water Management District

## TABLE OF EXHIBITS

- A. Excerpts from the *City of Treasure Island Comprehensive Plan*
- B. Not Applicable
- C. United States Geological Survey 72 Minute Quadrangle Map
- D.
  1. Property Boundaries, Parcel Numbers, and Ownership Information Map
  2. Detail of Original Site Plat Map
- E. C Mile Aerial Photograph
- F.
  1. Natural Resources Map
  2. Florida Natural Areas Inventory Map
- G. Map of Physical Alterations to the Project Site
- H. Future Land Use Map
- I. Existing Land Use Map
- J.
  1. Public Facilities, Recreation Facilities, and Water-Dependent/Related Facilities Map
  2. Existing and Planned Greenways Map
- K. Soils Associations Map
- L.
  1. Existing Rights-of-Way and Unpaved Beach Access Map
  2. Resolution Vacating Alley Found on Project Site
  3. Description of Existing and Proposed Rights-of-Way and Easements
- M.
  1. Flood Zones, Flood Plains, and Coastal High Hazard Area Map
  2. Excerpts from the *Pinellas County Unified Local Mitigation Strategy*
- N. Project Site Photographs
- O. Information on Parcel Donated by the Florida Department of Transportation
- P. Environmental Assessment
- Q.
  1. Conceptual Site Plan -- Detail
  2. Conceptual Site Plan Boundaries
- R. Letter of Endorsement from the Clearwater Marine Aquarium
- S. Reference